Of Killer Teddy Bears and Alternate Universes

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Of Killer Teddy Bears and Alternate Universes

by Calacious

Summary

Danny's staring into the beady eyes of a sinister teddy bear, hoping that Steve and the rest of his team will get to him before the infamous Mr. Teddy Bear snuffs out his life.

Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own the characters of this work of fiction, and I have made no profit, monetary or otherwise, through this.

A/N: Very loosely based on the first episode of season 2 of the 1962 show, "The Avengers," titled, "Mr. Teddy Bear," in which a professional killer uses mechanical devices to kill, and hides behind a teddy bear. This is pre-slash, and features Danny whump, and overprotective Steve.

Chapter 1

The teddy bear creeped him out, and Danny wasn't sure whether to laugh or cry about it. The whole situation - it had started out as a case to find a hired killer, now it was a situation - had been absurd from the word, 'go'.

Not that anyone had actually said, 'go,' or even thought it, but it was an idiom that worked for the fucked up situation that Danny was caught smack dab in the middle of. If one could call being trapped in a windowless room, being spoken to by a robotic teddy bear while the rest of his team tried to track down the man behind the teddy bear before Danny was killed by said teddy bear, a situation. It was more like a nightmare. One from which Danny might never wake.

"Detective Williams, may I call you, Danny? Or, Danno?" The teddy bear chuckled. It was tinny sounding, and it made Danny feel sick, but he didn't say anything in response to the taunting.

"I think that we're past the point of formality in our...relationship. Wouldn't you agree?" The teddy bear's mouth moved just slightly out of sync with the killer's voice, and that was a little unnerving, as was the man's almost soothing and companionable voice. He had a distinctive accent, though Danny couldn't quite place it. It wasn't British, or Russian. It was some European accent. Whatever it was. Not that it mattered. Knowing where the teddy bear's accent came from would not save his life.

Danny shook his head. "No, I wouldn't agree."

He wiped sweat off his brow with the back the hand that wasn't holding the gun that he kept trained on the mechanical teddy bear. It felt ridiculous, aiming his weapon at a teddy bear, but the man they'd been looking for used electronics to kill his victims, and Danny was *not* going to be killed by a teddy bear if he could help it.

"Fine, Detective Williams," the teddy bear's voice had an angry edge to it. "How long do you think we have before the rest of your team manages to track us down? Do you think they'll find us before I kill you?"

"Us:" Danny asked, eyes darting toward the door that had sealed itself shut behind him. He'd tried it before; it hadn't budged. It was hot in the room, or maybe he was just hot. He felt like he was suffocating, and loosened the collar of his shirt.

The teddy bear chuckled, and Danny felt the hairs on the back of his neck raise. There was a faint click, and the room filled with a dense fog. It happened much more quickly than it does in the movies, and seemed to come from all four walls, the ceiling and the floor. Danny held his breath, hoping that this didn't spell the end for him.

Danny lost the battle between one heartbeat and the next, and he breathed in the gas, lungs unable to hold out any longer. It was acrid, and it burned. He'd only made it to a hundred Mississippi. Grace would not be impressed. Steve would probably force him into some kind

of SEAL-like training until he could manage to hold his breath, underwater, for five hundred Mississippi.

He could hear laughter, tinny and mocking, coming from the teddy bear, and, his last thought, before he passed out completely, was that he should've shot the damn thing when he'd had the chance. Not that it would have made a difference. The teddy bear was just a front for the killer. Danny knew that he would never look at another teddy bear the same, that is, if he somehow managed to survive this. If Steve, and the others made it to him in time.

Danny pictured Grace. Steve. Palm trees swaying in the breeze that comes off of the ocean at Steve's place. He must be dreaming. Or dead. Paradise really did look an awful lot like Hawaii, Danny decided. Even so, it wasn't wholly unpleasant. He didn't see any pineapple trees, and there was no sand. No hot sun pounding down on his face, though he did feel uncomfortably warm.

Waking was a lot like falling off a cliff. Not that Danny has fallen off a lot of cliffs or anything. He'd watched Steve fall off a cliff. Never wanted a repeat experience of that. Marriage to Rachel had been an awful like falling off a cliff, too. The abrupt ending a lot like slamming into an unforgiving earth. Not that he'd ever tell her that. He wanted to live, of course, provided that he wasn't already dead.

Danny gasped at air as though he was waking from the dead. Lungs seizing and straining. It was a simple act. Breathing. One that normally doesn't require much thought. It hurt, and he tasted the copper of blood at the back of his throat, and, for a few moments, he felt as though he hovered between life and death.

"Thank god," a voice said, Steve's, Danny thought. It was harsh and haggard, made it sound like the man had been crying, but Danny, for the life of him, couldn't figure out why Steve would be crying.

Lips brushed against his own, so briefly that Danny wondered if they were really there, if Steve had really kissed him. It made Danny's lips tingle, and left him with an odd sensation in his chest. One not associated with the heavy elephant that was currently sitting on it, trying to suffocate him.
"Open your eyes, buddy," Steve said, fingers gently caressing Danny's cheeks, his hair, his brow.

Danny could smell his partner's breath - bitter coffee and peppermint - could feel its heat against his cheek, his ear. He wanted to open his eyes, because he thought that he must be hallucinating, or stuck in some kind of alternate universe where he and Steve mean a little more to each other than just buddies who are partners at work.

It was dizzying when Steve's lips brushed against Danny's forehead, and the desperate quality to the man's voice when he begged Danny to open his eyes, made Danny's heart race.

It was overwhelming, and he thought that maybe it was the other life, the one where Steve was just his partner at work which was the dream, and this, Steve kissing him, because Danny meant more to him than just someone he worked with, was the reality.

Whatever the case. Whichever universe Danny belonged to, this, Steve's lips on his, voice breaking with worry, was the reality that Danny wanted. A reality where he and Steve could move from buddies who work together to partners in and outside of work.

When he finally managed to open his eyes, everything was fuzzy, but he could just make out the shape of the teddy bear out of the corner of his eye. It was looming over Steve's shoulder, its black, beady eyes were menacing in the way that they reflected the light. Danny wanted to move Steve away from the bear - from the danger that it presented, but his arms were uncooperative, and his tongue was glued to the roof of his mouth, and he was completely useless right now.

"Easy, D," Steve said. "It's over. We got the bastard. We got him."

There was a goofy grin on Steve's face, and it was contagious, even though Danny wasn't quite tracking the conversation, or the busy, bordering on frenetic, movements that were taking place around him.

The room that had been his prison cell minutes ago was now a hub of activity as Danny was assessed by medical personnel, and the room was being systematically disassembled, the teddy bear, treated as though it was a bomb that might go off, was put in a special box and removed from the room. Danny breathed a little easier.

Steve, though he'd moved to let the medics work on Danny, was still hovering by his side, a hand clutching Danny's tightly, eyes watching everything the medics did critically, body poised to take action should it be deemed necessary. It was as endearing as it was annoying, Steve's mother hen routine, and that's when Danny knew that, no matter which universe he'd been brought back to, he wanted this one, where Steve was just as likely to punch a medic in the face for missing a vein while inserting an IV in Danny's arm, as he was to pull Danny close and kiss him soundly, eyewitnesses be damned.

Kissing in the Sunrise

Chapter Summary

Danny doesn't know if the kiss was real or a figment of his oxygen-deprived imagination. He decides to ask Steve.

Chapter Notes

Written in response to runegirl60's comment. I'm not sure this is an epilogue, but I do hope that you enjoy it. Thank you for reading.

They decided to camp out on Steve's lanai after the celebration barbecue. Danny was still having a hard time with enclosed spaces. Steve was being understanding.

Chin and Kono had long since gone home, and predawn was just starting to light up the horizon.

They were both nursing one last beer, and Danny still wasn't sure if the memory of Steve kissing him on the lips was something that his oxygen starved brain had made up (if so, why a kiss from Steve, and not some buxom blonde, or at least a different brunette?) or if it had been real.

Not knowing if Steve really had kissed him, or not, was almost more disturbing than being trapped in a windowless room with a taunting teddy bear had been. And the fact that, Danny was focused on a kiss that may or may not have happened, was, in and of itself, more than a little concerning, and on many different levels.

He should be focused on other, more important, aspects of the event, such as the fact that he'd breathed in poisoned air, and he'd been, in essence, dead for a minute, or two, before Steve and the others had found him and brought him back to life, which could, of course, explain the kiss. Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation being what it is and all.

Except, well, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation rarely (never) involved tender lip on lip action. It was always about the breathing. About sending quick, efficient puffs of air into someone else's lungs, and that was not at all in keeping with what Danny remembered, or thought he remembered about the kiss that may or may not have happened.

"What's wrong, Danny?" Steve asked, drawing Danny out of his thoughts, though, when Danny turned to look at him, his gaze landed on the man's lips, the large hands that were

holding a beer, the man's lap.

Blinking and turning away, Danny shrugged. "Nothing's wrong, Steve. I was just thinking. You do know what that is, right? It's something that I do often. Something you do less often."

Danny chanced a look at Steve, and almost smiled at the look he was casting in Danny's direction. It was a cross between Steve's constipation face, and his I'm about to go Navy SEAL on your ass, face. It was cute, and Danny found that thought disturbing as well, because, since when had he thought of Steve as cute?

"Cut the crap, Danny. Tell me what's on your mind," Steve pressed, brow crinkled with concern, lips slightly parted (and wet), fingers working the label on his beer loose as though he was just as nervous as Danny.

Heart pounding, mouth dry, palms sweatier than a teenager getting ready for a first date, Danny leaned forward on the lounge chair, let the beer he'd been holding (and not drinking) dangle from his fingertips, focused on that, rather than on Steve being so close that he could feel the heat coming off of the other man.

Throwing aside all caution, and knowing that Grace would probably roll her eyes at him and put down her foot if she knew that he was having what she'd probably call a 'mini-freakout' over this (*It's only Uncle Steve, Danno, he loves you.*), Danny said, "Did you kiss me, Steven?"

Steve's mouth opened and closed a couple of times before his lips decided on forming something that was a cross between pout and frown. His eyes were crinkled at the edges. Confusion, maybe fear, was etched in the lines of his brow. His fingers were plucking at the beer label as though it was some kind of life work of his, de-labeling beer bottles.

"What?" Steve tossed the question at him as though it was a grenade.

Taking a deep breath, Danny decided to toss that grenade right back into Steve's lap, because, if he was right, then he was the kissee and not the kisser, and as such, it was up to Steve to man up, not that Danny was a girl in any of this. He wasn't. Did not want to wake up in a universe in which he was a girl.

The universe he may or may not have woken up in was confusing enough without factoring in gender swaps. He shivered at the very thought of waking up as a woman, and Steve placed a hand on his shoulder. The warmth of Steve's touch traveled from Danny's shoulder to the rest of his body in zero point one seconds, or one point zero seconds. The beer bottle slipped from his fingers, wobbled and then stood upright.

"You okay, Danny?" Steve was in his face, concerned.

Danny could hear the man's heartbeat, could feel it through Steve's fingertips on his shoulder, or maybe it was his own heart trying to force its way out of his chest.

"In the room, with the teddy bear," Danny said, voice low, too hoarse, "did you kiss me?"

Steve lowered his head, and Danny could hear the man's jaw clenching, it made his own teeth ache in sympathy. Not knowing what to do with his hands, now that they were beer-free, Danny placed them on either side of Steve's face, and lifted it, rested his forehead against Steve's.

Steve's eyes were a storm-tossed blue of worry and fear, and Danny couldn't stop the smile, or the odd bubble of happiness that welled up inside of him, because he knew what had happened that day.

"Did you kiss me, Steven?" Danny asked in a whisper, though he already knew the answer.

Mouth twisting, face screwing up in a look of self-loathing, and shame, Steve licked his lips and nodded.

"Yeah, Danny, I did. I kissed you," the words came out of Steve's lips in an angry staccato. "You died on me, Danny," there was anguish, and accusation in the words that Steve launched at him, as though dying had been Danny's choice. "You fucking died on me."

"You kissed me," Danny said, focusing on Steve's lips, the thin, angry line that they made, the sudden dry quality to them, the memory of how they'd felt on his after Steve had breathed life into him.

"Yeah," Steve repeated nodding, looking at Danny as though he thought he might need to return to the hospital.

Danny rubbed a thumb along the line of Steve's jaw, and felt the tension there. "You kissed me," Danny repeated.

Steve stiffened, attempted to pull away from him, but Danny held him there, ignored the sound of glass hitting the cement when the beer bottle Steve had been holding clattered to the lanai. It didn't shatter, but bobbled in place, toppled, and rolled away, tinkering across the cement, spilling beer in its wake, the bitter scent of it mingled with the thick air that surrounded them.

Steve's heart thrummed beneath Danny's fingertips, he could feel the tension mounting, Steve's need to break away, to move and put some distance between them, but Danny refused to let him go. Refused to lose something before he'd even really experienced it when he was fully conscious, and not befuddled.

"You kissed me," Danny whispered, thumb running across Steve's lower lip, making it tremble. Steve shook, and Danny did, too.

"You kissed me." Danny was stuck on auto repeat, brain exploding with something that he couldn't pin down, because all he could think about right now were Steve's lips, how they'd felt when he'd been out of it, how they might feel now that his brain was fully functional, though it felt oddly oxygen deprived, because he was finding it a little hard to breathe right now with Steve's lips being so close to his own.

Close, but not close enough.

"Yeah, I kissed you," Steve agreed, nodding. "You died. I kissed you."

"Would you do it again?" Danny's voice was thin air, warbling.

Steve nodded, licking his lips. "Yeah, I'd do it again."

There was no unspoken, 'if I had to', just a tender, almost tentative press of Steve's lips against Danny's, the parting of lips, hands shifting to move from shoulder, to knee and thigh. It was nothing, and everything like Danny remembered -- dizzying, oxygen depriving, life altering.

"And again," Steve murmured, eyes sparkling, lips quirking upward, hand curling around Danny's thigh.

As the sun's first rays made their way across the horizon, glinting off the ocean that lapped at the shore, painting the morning in a bright orange-gold, Danny and Steve shared another kiss. One that involved teeth and tongue, breathy moans, and the promise of many more to come.

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